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ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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February 8, 2006

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The Honorable Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary
Department of Energy
Forrestal Building
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman:

In his State of the Union address, President Bush announced an "Advanced Energy Initiative" to reduce the Nation's "addiction to oil" by reducing oil imports from the Middle East by 75 percent by 2025. A press release issued by the White House indicated this initiative will provide for funding increases for clean-energy research, coal research, the FutureGen project, and solar and wind energy. The release also outlined various proposals to accelerate the development of domestic renewable alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuels, including cellulosic ethanol, hybrid vehicles, and hydrogen fuel.

The press release also noted that the President's energy initiative builds on prior programs, including those authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) which he signed into law in August 2005. This raises several important questions.

First, to what extent does the President's Energy Initiative require new statutory authority from Congress? Will the Administration be proposing new legislation? Or does the President's initiative amount to a commitment by the Administration to support funding existing programs?

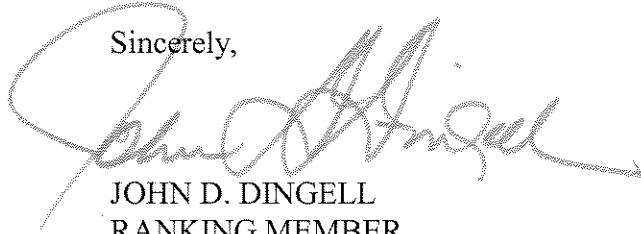
Second, to the extent the President's Energy Initiative relies on existing programs authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and other law, does the Administration's FY2007 budget proposal request appropriations in the authorized amount? For example, it appears that the Administration's FY2007 budget proposal requests \$2 billion less for low-income heating assistance than was authorized only six months ago when the President signed EPACT into law. Please provide a comparison of the funding request for each element of the Advanced Energy Initiative with its corresponding authorized funding level.

The Honorable Samuel W. Bodman
Page 2

Third, the President's budget proposes numerous cuts in the energy budget as well. For example, the Administration's FY2007 budget request cuts spending for weatherization programs by \$78 million. In addition, recent news reports indicate that the Department is laying off research employees in the very areas mentioned by the President in his State of the Union address, specifically in the areas of wind and biomass. Please list all program cuts, along with any proposed reductions in personnel.

In order to assist Members of the Committee in better understanding these issues and in preparation for a hearing by the Committee on Energy and Commerce in March, I request that you provide your response to my questions by no later than Wednesday, February 22, 2006. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John D. Dingell", is written over a large, faint circular watermark or stamp. The signature is fluid and cursive.

JOHN D. DINGELL
RANKING MEMBER